

Why Political Disinformation in Honduras Is Spreading | Time

By Vera Bergengruen

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At 10:16pm on October 7, a cluster of nineteen Twitter accounts shared identical opinions about the upcoming presidential election in Honduras at the exact same second. Claiming to be supporters of opposition candidate Xiomara Castro, they all falsely suggested Castro might join forces with Yani Rosenthal, another candidate who had just returned to the country after serving a prison term in the U.S. for money laundering for a drug gang. “If she forgets about the people to do business with Yani Rosenthal, I won’t even go to vote,” a user named Tere Bautista tweeted. A user named Wilfredo Rolan seemed to agree, tweeting “If she joins ex-con Rosenthal I’m not even going to vote,” along with a money laundering meme. None of these were real Hondurans—or real people, according to a new analysis shared with TIME by Nisos, a cybersecurity firm based in Virginia. The profile photos on the accounts linked back to the Facebook pages of unsuspecting Peruvians thousands of miles away. The tweets were one of several waves of coordinated posts from hundreds of fake Twitter accounts in an ongoing disinformation campaign ahead of Honduras’ Nov. 28 election, spreading conspiracies about opposition candidates and seeming to deter citizens from voting at all. [...]

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